

We don't lock down a bill and not allow any amendments to occur on that bill except those that are accepted by the majority side and the Majority Leader, and then say to the minority, well, because you wouldn't accept our process of locking down the amendment process, we're going to file cloture to shut you out completely. That truly is an autocratic level, which this Senate has never seen. It puts us on a slippery slope. And the other side of the aisle may not be in the majority forever, especially if we continue to produce such a dysfunctional legislative calendar as they have over the last year. I would think the American people would ask for a change. But they've now opened the door to running the

Senate as an autocratic system, as a dictatorial system where the rights are made completely subservient to the Majority Leader because he fills up the tree. And then when he doesn't like amendments, he files cloture.

Let's talk about some of the amendments that he doesn't want us to hear about on the Farm Bill. He doesn't want an amendment offered which would say to farm families, especially mothers in farm families, you'll have access to OB-GYNs. That's one of the amendments I intended to offer. It would simply say that OB-GYNs who practice in farm and rural communities would be immune from excessive liability and lawsuits from trial lawyers. We know for a fact that we've lost most of our OB-GYNs in rural America. These baby doctors can't practice in rural America because there aren't enough clients for them to generate enough revenue to pay the costs of their malpractice insurance, which is generated by these lawsuits from trial lawyers. Well, the other side of the aisle is not going to allow me to offer that amendment. What an outrage.

They also don't want an amendment which would give firefighters in this country the right to bargain in order to reach agreement on contracts. Now, I don't think fires just burn in cities. Farmers have fires. In fact, if you look at what's happening in the West with their wildfires, there are a lot of issues with fires for farmers in this country. And I suspect there are a number of fires, especially silo fires, this I know because I come from an area where there were occasional silo fires, so they need firefighters. But the other side of the aisle doesn't want to hear about an amendment that deals with firefighter rights. They want to lock that amendment out of the process.

They also want to lock out of the process an amendment which would address the issue of people who are caught up in this terrible mortgage crisis we have. There are a lot of farmers I suspect, and a lot of Americans generally, who didn't know how these ARMs worked when they entered into these deals. Their interest rates are jumping up into levels they can't afford and when their homes are foreclosed on, they get a double whammy of getting hit by the IRS with what is known as a recognized gain because their home was foreclosed on. This is a really difficult thing to have happen to someone - to have their home foreclosed on and then be hit with an IRS bill for having their home foreclosed on. I was going to suggest that we take that issue up here because it happens to relate to a lot of farm members who are being foreclosed on.

I was going to suggest that we take up an amendment which might look at some of these new commodities that have been put into this bill, such as the asparagus program and the camelina program. We don't want to address the fact that this bill contains \$10 billion -- *\$10 billion* -- of gamesmanship, in moving dates so they can make this bill look more affordable and less costly. Don't want to have an amendment on that, which would make the bill honest on its payments, don't want to hear about that amendment. And they don't want to hear about this amendment.

They have put in this bill what's called "walking-around money." Walking-around money for the farm states in this country -- actually five farm states -- called a \$5 billion disaster loan fund. The way we've always handled disaster loans for the farm country -- and they

have them and they're legitimate -- is that we have simply passed an emergency bill around here to cover the disaster when it occurs. This sets up a new fund which will be a floor essentially, that says there's \$5 billion in this kitty sitting over here, and if there is a disaster you can take this money, too.

What's the practical implication of that? Every windstorm that occurs in North Carolina and blows over a mailbox is going to be declared a disaster so they can get some of this money. We know we're going to fund disasters when they occur. Why would we pre-fund disasters in a way that's going to make it guaranteed that a disaster will occur. Let's take that disaster money and put it over to "IDEA." There's an account which would give relief to a lot of families in this country, a lot of small towns in this country, farm communities and other communities, who have a huge burden of IDEA and special education. Let's take that \$5 billion out of that emergency account rather than having walking-around money for the five states. Use it for IDEA, which will benefit all of the states in this country.

But they don't want to hear those amendments. It's incredible that on a bill of this size, one of the biggest bills we deal with as a Congress, one of the most important pieces of public policy we deal with, that the other side of the aisle and the Majority Leader has specifically set up a procedure where amendments simply won't be tolerated. That's totally inappropriate. I think basically what the other side of the aisle wants to do is kill this bill.

Now, from my perspective, this isn't a good bill and I am going to be voting against it, but I know it will pass. There are a lot of people around here that have these different commodities. They build up enough votes to pass this bill. That's the way the Farm Bill always works. But that's no reason why we shouldn't have a chance to debate some of the issues, to address baby doctors in rural communities, like the need of firefighters to have adequate bargaining rights, like the need for people getting foreclosed on to not get hit with an IRS bill, like the need to have proper accounting on this bill for what they're spending, like the need of not setting up a \$5 billion walking-around fund.

We should have amendments to address all of these issues. That's what the process of the Senate is all about. But it's being denied here. The result of that denial is that those of us who happen to believe that the Senate should function as place where things are amended and discussed and aired and heard are going to have to resist this bill.